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## COMMUNISTIC SOCIETIES IN THE UNITED STATES

IT is not my intention in this article to write a history of communistic societies, but simply to point out some of the salient features of representative societies and draw certain conclusions concerning the movement as a whole. Due weight has never been given to modern experiments in communism, and recent developments both of the old and the new societies must necessarily alter the conclusions of early writers. Information concerning the early societies I have taken from the standard accounts, but information concerning recent societies I have obtained mainly from correspondence with officials of the societies or from articles in the communistic publications. Some record exists, often very meagre, of about one hundred attempts at community life; though probably many more have been started without ever having been recorded.<sup>1</sup>

With the exception of a few isolated attempts, these societies naturally fall into four groups:

First, the Owenite group, including all the societies started under the inspiration of Robert Owen. Fourteen<sup>2</sup> of these societies were organized, all but two of which belonged to the years 1825-1826; but none were of long duration. Secondly, the Fourierist group, comprising twenty-seven societies, established in accordance with the theories of Charles Fourier. This movement began in 1843 and lasted about ten years, the societies being somewhat more successful than those of the Owenite period. Thirdly, the societies organized during the last fifteen years under the influence of modern socialistic and coöperative theories. This group includes twenty or more communities. Fourthly, the religious societies founded by persons who belonged to a particular sect, comprising twenty or more, and including some of the oldest and most successful

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Albert Shaw, in writing his history of *Icaria* (p. 186), says that he came across traces of about fifty attempts at communism.

<sup>2</sup> Lockwood says there were nineteen, but ten of these were the various groups on the New Harmony estate. Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, p. 216.

communities. In most of these cases, communism of property was not adopted at the start, and has always been of secondary importance in their systems.

It will be worth while to note the characteristics of each of these groups and to study the experiences of the most important societies before attempting to draw general conclusions with regard to the movement as a whole.

Robert Owen began his experiments in this country in 1825, when he was at the height of his popularity. He had been eminently successful in his work among his employees at New Lenark, and none of his European societies had been started.<sup>1</sup> He consequently began his work in this country with an attractive philosophy and with the appearance of having successfully applied that philosophy. Owen's theory of life, which resulted from his experiences at New Lenark—that a man's character was made not by him, but for him, by circumstances over which he had no control—was altogether too general to apply to a communistic society. He went on the supposition that the response to environment would be immediate and that the environment in a communistic society would be ideal.

The most important of the experiments of this period was that at New Harmony, Indiana, conducted by Owen himself. The location was a most favorable one. The Harmonists, a religious communistic society, were just moving from Indiana to Pennsylvania, and Owen obtained their entire plant, land, buildings and machinery, for \$140,000. This gave the means ready prepared for carrying his plans into execution. Serious mistakes, however, were made at the start. Owen was rash enough to issue a general invitation to become members to all who were in sympathy with his ideas on founding a new state of society. In response to this invitation about 900 persons flocked to New Harmony, representing every state in the Union excepting two, and nearly every country in northern Europe. The experiment attracted educators and scientific men on account of the freedom of religious belief, but it attracted idlers

<sup>1</sup> The experiment at Orbiston, Scotland, was organized in 1825; that at Ralahine, Ireland, in 1839; and the two farms at East Tytherly, England, in 1840. The one at Ralahine existed for three and one-half years, the others for two years.

also who were merely waiting for something to turn up. Some came out of curiosity, others to have a good time, others to live without work and still others to make trouble. One dishonest speculator induced Owen to sell him 1500 acres of land "with all thereon," as the contract read. Then the night before the contract went into effect the purchaser moved on to his own land all the farm implements and live stock that he could find.

It was the purpose of Owen to form a preliminary society to educate the members in the tenets of communism. The final society was to include those persons only who had full confidence in each other. Having formed the preliminary society, Owen returned to England for a time, leaving the direction of affairs in the hands of a committee. During his absence the society drifted. After his return, however, matters improved somewhat under his experienced guidance. Nevertheless, he was induced to found the final society of absolute equality too early and all members of the preliminary society were permitted to join. Almost at once disintegration began, through the withdrawal of some of the best members to form a new society, and disintegration continued until the final dissolution two years later. The true cause of failure seems to have been the intimate association of large numbers of persons who were incompatible. Owen himself attributes it to the poor material. A list of admonitions given to the society by the directors evidently points to some of their weaknesses.<sup>1</sup> Some of the more refined members objected to making the equality with the rude and uncultivated elements too intimate. At one time the complaint was made that "industrious members have been compelled to experience the unpleasant sensation of working for

<sup>1</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, p. 137. "There must be no abuse, growling or loud talking, and no grumbling, carping or murmuring against the work of other individuals; those who shirk their work are deserving of pity; distinctions in eating and drinking among the members must be discarded; children must be excluded from the dining room during meals; adult members should not stalk about the room during meals; the intemperate must never be abused; when individual members are 'affected with the disease of laziness' the utmost forbearance must be necessary; criticism should not be resented; cleanliness and regularity must be enforced; 'no anger ought to be felt against the female members upon their aversion to the work of the coöperation; or when they brawl, quarrel or indulge in loud talk.' The children, however, should be taught better."

others who are either unwilling or unable to do their share of the labor." <sup>1</sup> Drunkenness also was a source of great annoyance. Owen tried to forbid the use of intoxicants altogether, but without success. In fact one member was admitted to the society whose chief possession turned out to be a barrel of whisky which he concealed in a cellar and secretly gave to the members.

As early as the spring of 1827, two years after its founding, the failure of the attempt at New Harmony was admitted. Various groups of persons who had felt themselves in accord with each other had withdrawn from time to time, and founded new societies on land adjacent to the original society, so that in 1827, when communism had been abandoned at New Harmony, a ring of communistic societies existed around the parent society and of these there was still great hope. With Owen's departure soon after, however, the adjacent societies gradually died out.

This early experiment at New Harmony illustrates only too well the difficulties of many later societies, although perhaps the problems arising from discordant membership were somewhat extreme. Of the other societies started under the Owenite movement none was more successful, and none was more instructive, than this first experiment at New Harmony.

We may, therefore, pass to the consideration of the much larger movement in the middle of the century which owed its origin to the doctrines of Charles Fourier. The theories of Fourier were not communistic, although his social reforms were to be made through the establishment of colonies, or phalansteries, of from fifteen hundred to two thousand persons each. At least nothing was to be attempted with less than five hundred persons. The inhabitants of a phalanx were to fall into series and groups according to their natural attractions for each other and for different kinds of work. A series was to be composed of from seven to nine persons of similar tastes who should devote themselves to a particular line of work, such as the care of apple trees; and several series were to unite to form a group which should

<sup>1</sup> Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, p. 137.

take charge of a larger division of work, like the care of all fruit trees. Distribution of products was to be in accordance with exertion, talent and capital; five-twelfths was to go to labor, four-twelfths to capital and three-twelfths to talent. Labor was to be divided into three classes, the necessary, the useful and the agreeable—the necessary to be paid at the highest rate.

Fourier, unlike Owen, never attempted a practical demonstration of his principles. One or two partial experiments were tried in France before the author's death in 1837, but these, Fourier said, never satisfied his requirements. The movement in the United States began in 1845 and was led by Albert Brisbane, who wrote a popular treatise on Fourier's doctrines and succeeded in enlisting Horace Greeley and Parke Godwin in the movement. Of the numerous experiments in the United States, nearly all were started hastily with insufficient capital and housing accommodation for the members and with the number of members far below the lowest limit set by Fourier. In other words, most of the experiments were expressions of sentimental enthusiasm for new doctrines rather than deliberate attempts to test a new social system. In fact, it may be said that Fourier's system has never been tried; the *Famelistère* at Guise, which is considered the single survival of the Fourierist movement, is by no means a self-sufficing phalanx such as Fourier advocated. The experiences of the so-called Fourierist societies, were, however, varied and instructive.

Poor location was the cause of failure in some cases. Of this class was a society in which Horace Greeley was interested, named Sylvania. It was to have been an agricultural community and three hundred acres of land were purchased. But the site was chosen in the spring of the year before the snow was off the ground, by a committee consisting of "a landscape painter, an industrious cooper and a homœopathic doctor." Some of the land proved to be so poor that it yielded no more than the seed sown, and the place was deserted in a year and a half. Nearly all the Pennsylvania experiments were unfortunate in their location. The societies invested heavily in land and the greater part of it was of poor quality. Seven asso-

ciations are credited with 48,694 acres. They were attracted by the low price. The One Menthian community paid only sixty-five cents an acre for its land, but found it dear at any price.

By far the best known experiment of this period was that of Brook Farm, which deserves mention here for two reasons. First, the members were decidedly superior to the great majority of persons who have engaged in communistic enterprises. Nordhoff insists that communists should be compared with the class of mechanics or even with the ordinary workingmen in the cities, or with the farming population in the country.<sup>1</sup> In this respect Brook Farm cannot be included with other communistic societies, although after it became a phalanx in 1844 its membership became somewhat more commonplace. Secondly, the members remained harmonious to the end; hence we may call the experiment a social success. Brook Farm was weakest on its financial side. Few of the industries, outside of the school, paid; and this fact was discouraging to the members. The change from an independent settlement to a Fourieristic phalanx was made partly to give it new life. Although the location was not very advantageous, the experiment would probably have lasted longer than it did, had it not lost its chief building by fire as it was nearing completion.

The most successful society of this period, as far as age is concerned, was the North American Phalanx, established in 1843. This society lasted thirteen years—a very creditable age, considering that most communistic societies die in infancy. The North American Phalanx achieved moderate financial success, the property at the time of dissolution bringing sixty-five cents on the dollar. During its active life wages varied from six to ten cents per hour, about five per cent was paid to capital, and after nine years an extra dividend was declared to labor. Ability received five cents a day extra, but this was not enough to attract as much skilled labor as was needed. The members generally admitted that they could have made more outside the phalanx and the young people were often attracted to the larger opportunities in the competitive world. The members

were never very harmonious. Some wanted central administration, others did not. Some were vegetarians, and had to eat at a separate table. Some of the women were dress reformers, and strange sights were seen. The differences finally culminated in a division, and a second community was founded, which naturally weakened the first. Later, religious differences seriously disturbed the community. The immediate cause of dissolution, as in the case of Brook Farm, was the destruction of property by fire. Horace Greeley offered them a loan to make good the loss, but the sentiment of the members was against further continuance. The North American Phalanx had outlived the movement that gave it inspiration. Enthusiasm had waned; people were interested in other things. It was the sole survivor and, feeling its loneliness, it decided to go the way of the world.

The most important Fourieristic experiment after the North American Phalanx was the Wisconsin Phalanx, which has been described as "pecuniarily successful but socially a failure." It even paid a premium on its stock at dissolution. It made the mistake, along with many other societies, of building a large unitary dwelling, which is economical in material but wasteful of nerve force. This was one of the few societies in which discord arose over the unequal remuneration of different classes of laborers, for the Wisconsin phalanx attempted to put Fourier's theory of distribution into practice.

The experiments in western New York are of interest also because the attempt was made to carry out Fourier's theories in as great detail as possible. A confederation of phalansteries near Rochester was formed, known as the American Industrial Union, and the Fourieristic classification of industry was carefully made; but, as none of the associations lasted two years, the detailed organization came to nothing.

Coming now to the modern period, we note that the communistic and socialistic experiments are supposed to represent more scientific theories of social reorganization than those of previous periods. Doubtless the experiments have been planned with more care and foresight than were most of the



earlier attempts, and yet the difficulties have been similar. Friction arising from life in the unitary dwellings has been experienced anew, divisions over the method of government and over the enforced equality of unequals are always making their appearance. The migration of eccentric characters from one society to another, and the appearance of the ideas of vegetarianism, of free love and of dress reform, all tend to create a similarity between recent experiments and earlier ones.

The most notable communistic experiment of recent years has been Ruskin, established in 1894 in Tennessee. This community was founded by J. A. Wayland, the editor of a socialistic paper, *The Coming Nation*, to demonstrate socialism; but it was never purely socialistic. All adult labor was paid at the same rate according to the time employed. A membership fee of \$500 was demanded of new members, this being held to represent one share of stock in the corporation.

For several years Ruskin showed an enormous vitality very promising of success, for it passed through almost every trial to which communistic societies are exposed. In the first place it was a pioneer society, and, with the exception of the printing plant of *The Coming Nation*, it had all its industries to establish and its lands to clear. The discouragement of this pioneering period would have been too much for many a society to survive. Yet, while starting with the value of a printing plant, tools and all materials contributed by members, estimated at only \$18,000, five years later the wealth of the community had increased to \$94,000.

But Ruskin, like most communities, had to stand the trial of division among its members. It occurred over the question of individual or social ownership of the printing plant, and resulted in the withdrawal of the founder of the society and the former owner of the printing press with a large contingent of followers. The printing press was left with the society for a consideration of \$2,000 in the stock of the colony. This occurred only a year after the founding of Ruskin. The next year, too, brought its trial. It was discovered that the location of Ruskin was absolutely unfitted for agriculture, and the whole colony had to be moved to a better location some

six miles away. Later still another division among members occurred, this time over the theory of anarchism, which some of the members wished to substitute for socialism. And to add to the strife this same faction advocated and attempted to spread the doctrines of free love. The struggle between the two factions became severe and was embittered by personal jealousy. In Ruskin, as in other societies, persons of different social position found it hard to live together for any length of time on intimate terms. The uneducated were scornful of the educated, while the refined found continued association at meals and in social and business meetings with their coarse and stupid comrades most exasperating. Hatred between factions became so great that it has been impossible to get an unbiassed account of the trouble from either side. We do know, however, that the anarchists, who belonged to the minority party but among whom were some of the oldest members, were forced out of office. As they said, they were determined to "rule or ruin;" and they finally succeeded in having an injunction served upon the society and in forcing dissolution by means of a receiver. This occurred in June, 1899. Some 250 members were determined to stay together. Accordingly they allied themselves with a struggling communistic society situated in Georgia, remained with them two years, quarrelled again and broke up \$6000 in debt. Half the members got employment under a contractor of convict labor.

The social success of Ruskin certainly was not great; its financial success is more difficult to estimate. Improvements were made rapidly and the plant increased greatly in value. Yet of its estimated value of nearly \$100,000, the 250 persons who went to Georgia, received, after paying all costs, only about \$3,500 in all. Ruskin seems to have suffered from lack of skilled management. Its members did not lack power of production so much as skill in marketing products. Its chief industries, aside from agriculture, were printing and cabinet-making, the manufacture of suspenders, cereal coffee, flour and chewing gum. The sale for these products was apparently always good, although this may have been partly on account of the character of the agent, who, though popularly known as

the buyer, made his reputation as a seller. Indeed, he had a mania for selling. It is said he would sell anything whether he made a profit on it or not. One year he sold all the Ruskin wheat crop for 70 cents a bushel, and later on the colony had to buy its own supply for 90 cents. Finally he sold the job press, which had cost \$1,100, for \$356 worth of machinery—a transaction which paralyzed the capacity of the printing plant.<sup>1</sup>

The Ruskin directors were unaccustomed to the handling of large sums of money, and the funds were not spent wisely. During five years the membership fees alone amounted to about \$60,000, a large proportion of the total value of the property, yet the debt on the land was never paid. During the later years of the existence of the community many of its industries declined from lack of interest, and the directors relied upon new membership fees and gifts from friends rather than upon increased production. The bookkeeping, also, was carried on in a slipshod manner, the monthly accounts seldom balancing. Some of the members were not at all disturbed by such unbusinesslike methods, feeling that bookkeeping and accounting were business methods in vogue under competition, and their very reason for coming to Ruskin had been to get rid of the methods of capitalism.

To an outsider the chief troubles at Ruskin seem to have been due to the jealous dispositions of a group of the older members. They were first dissatisfied because the founder retained his rights in the printing plant, and later they were jealous lest the new members should get the control into their hands. We can easily understand that it would have been hard for these older members to see the control pass into the hands of new members who might wish to change the policy of the society. But new members, admitted upon the same basis as the old, must of necessity be given equal rights in directing the affairs of a community. The society was evidently so anxious to get the \$500 membership fee that it did not exercise sufficient precaution in selecting new members.

I have dwelt at length on the experiences of Ruskin because

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Broome, *The Last Days of Ruskin*, pp. 109, 141.

this community illustrates so many of the difficulties of colony life. But the modern movement has further illustration from other kinds of experiments.

In 1895 the Brotherhood of the Coöperative Commonwealth was established. This was an association of about three thousand members altogether, with branches in different parts of the country, and its objects were twofold: first, to give a practical demonstration of the principles of socialism by establishing colonies; and secondly, to concentrate the socialistic movement in a particular state and endeavor to capture that state for socialism. The state of Washington was selected as the most likely prey, and in 1897 a call was issued for all socialists to migrate to Washington and assist in establishing a coöperative commonwealth. The Brotherhood hoped for about one thousand volunteers; but in the course of time one hundred and fifty persons assembled on Puget Sound, established in the wilderness a colony named Equality, and began the usual struggle with nature and individual selfishness. The society has six hundred acres of land, ninety of which have been cleared. The chief industries have been farming and lumbering. During the first few years the members had very hard pioneering work with a scant income, but the location proved to be exceptionally good and they finally obtained fair returns. The difficulties at Equality have been primarily of a social nature, and they are highly instructive for the student of communism. The colony started on the basis of absolute equality, which the members interpreted to mean submission to no authority. It was found necessary, however, to introduce one inequality after another, and enforce them by means of fines or other punishments. Then arose a great competition for the places of authority in order to direct instead of being directed. During this period experience taught the members many valuable truths. Among other things it was found that to profess socialism does not prove that one is wholly altruistic. At the end of the second year of its existence it was estimated that thirty-five per cent of its members were conscious collectivists, fifteen per cent conscious individualists, and the remainder without philosophy of any sort. And one of the members de-

clared that in those two years he had learned more concerning the weaknesses and peculiarities of human nature than in the forty-two previous years of his existence. The amount of individualism that can masquerade under the guise of socialism was a revelation to many. The two hardest lessons that these colonists had to learn, it was said, were, first, that they were working for themselves, secondly, that they must produce before they could consume. Any colony which succeeds in teaching its members these truths cannot be called an entire failure.

Dissatisfaction increased over a system which attempted but could not realize equality, and the society suffered greatly from the withdrawal of members. The membership was reduced from one hundred and sixty-two, in 1899, to thirty in 1904.

At this time the society was captured by the Freeland movement and the members voted unanimously to adopt the system of Theodore Hertzka,<sup>1</sup> which is supposed to permit the greatest possible amount of individual freedom and at the same time give the whole value of the product to the wage-earner. At the time of the change the members stated as a result of their experience, that communism was "unjust, unpractical and uneconomical."

Under the new system production is carried on by voluntary groups, consisting of one person or of many, which undertake the different lines of work, credit being granted free of charge by the association. The system went into effect January 1, 1905, the name of the colony being changed to Freeland. Seven groups have already been organized—dairy, orchard, clearing and agriculture, cereal coffee, apiary and baking, poultry and building. Each member receives a share of the products of his group according to the number of hours worked, although a premium may be arranged either for seniority or for ability. Considerable enthusiasm has been shown by the members in the new organization, and the change will doubtless infuse new life into the colony. It is very significant that, after eight years of struggle and friction under communism, relief should be sought

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Theodore Hertzka, Freeland.

in a system of coöperation which is not compulsory, and which gives the maximum of individual freedom. The discouragement of the communists is voiced by one writer, who says: "Any system that does not eliminate coöperation and provides social harmony, is well received."<sup>1</sup>

One year after the founding of Equality, the Coöperative Brotherhood was organized for the purpose of establishing a coöperative colony which should furnish homes and employment for the members and should ensure a home in case of disability. The colony was established at Burley, Washington, on Puget Sound. The first plan, which was in operation until 1903, provided that the members of the Brotherhood, after paying one hundred and twenty-five dollars in monthly instalments, should be entitled to a home in the colony, although the board of directors had the power to select from eligible members those who were best suited to the needs of the community. All members of the Brotherhood had an equal interest in the property and improvements, but for the maintenance of the members of the colony a certain percentage of the monthly receipts was set apart, and each one received a proportion according to the number of hours he had worked. Notwithstanding the assistance which the colony received from its non-resident members, progress was extremely slow. The accommodations were rough, and it was hard to get the right kind of laborers to reside continuously at the colony, and to do the hard pioneering work. The membership of the Brotherhood decreased from nearly twelve hundred to one hundred and twenty-five, the present membership, and that of the colony from about one hundred and twenty-five to forty.

The difficulties at Burley, unlike those at Equality, were financial rather than social. This does not mean that the members were all satisfied or entirely harmonious, but certain educated members made the social life as much of a success as was consistent with their poverty. They persisted in having a good time, they said, until they remembered how poor they were.

<sup>1</sup> *The Coöperator*, February, 1905. Recent reports from Freeland show that the new organization has not been a success, owing to the poor quality of the membership. The society has not, however, disbanded.

Debts, however, increased and enthusiasm decreased. The members became disheartened and it was felt that something must be done to meet the indebtedness. It was finally decided to lease the property for one year, beginning September 1, 1903, to one of their members. This member advanced money and became sole director of the colony, managing it like a private business on a profit-sharing basis. At the end of the year the colonists reorganized again on a coöperative basis, but they attempted to correct their previous mistakes by giving a greater amount of individual freedom, their opinion of compulsory coöperation being similar to that of Equality.

The failure of the first plan is attributed to many causes. The idle tried to live on the industrious, and the latter objected to sharing the products equally either with the idle or with the incompetent. Much blame, moreover, was laid on the management. The managing ability was doubtless mediocre, but the greatest weakness of the managers lay in the fact that they lacked authority to enforce their commands. Some of the workers objected to authority of any kind because it savored of exploitation. Furthermore, as the positions of the members were secured through payment of the membership fee, they could not always be given work for which they were best fitted, and they could not be compelled to do their best work, as the rules of discipline were not enforced. In short, it was agreed that strict coöperation was a failure with the ill-assorted material that came to the society.

The colony reorganized along Rochedale lines, stock in the Coöperative Brotherhood being exchanged for stock in the new company. The insurance feature of the Brotherhood was abandoned. The industries are now carried on by groups, and members of the Brotherhood may or may not be employed. Preference is given them provided they prove to be fit men for the positions. Each group has full control of the industry which it undertakes, such as agriculture or lumbering, and the returns depend more directly on individual labor. Profits are divided according to the amount of capital stock and of wages, or, in the case of the store, according to purchases.

The colony is now thought to be in good condition financi-

ally, and the outlook for success under the more individualistic organization is encouraging. But Burley furnishes another example of a colony which finds compulsory coöperation impracticable with the laborers who desire to coöperate.

Another movement, which illustrates the present tendency towards large enterprises, was that of the Industrial Brotherhood, organized by the former secretary of the Brotherhood of the Coöperative Commonwealth. When the latter organization declined to microscopic proportions, the secretary withdrew and proposed another scheme of even greater magnitude. After his experience with the Washington colony he decided that coöperation should not be confined to a single state, but that various coöperative enterprises should be started in different parts of the country simultaneously and should federate and assist each other. He felt that the only way to compete with the trusts would be to organize socialistic enterprises on the same gigantic scale. He believed that socialism could be put into operation at once if the socialists only desired it, but that any attempt to do so would be useless without a sufficient financial backing. Consequently he issued a call for one million men and one hundred million dollars. As this call did not receive sufficient response the movement was abandoned; and the Brotherhood was absorbed by the political socialistic movement.

Some of the communistic experiments of recent years have been carried on by earnest, self-sacrificing men and women with the serious purpose of solving the social problem. Others have been pretentious schemes for sweeping reforms made by over-confident reformers. Others still have been ill-planned attempts of persevering but unpractical reformers, almost ludicrous in their development. The last class is illustrated by the communistic attempts of Alcander Longley, of St. Louis. He began his communistic life at the age of twenty-one, when, in 1853, he became a member of the North American Phalanx. He left this community to become a founder of colonies. By 1865 he had founded three successive colonies, and their failure neither damped his ardor nor destroyed his faith. After that he was for a time a member of Icaria. But his desire to be a



leader in the movement caused him to leave Icaria and start a paper in St. Louis for the propagation of his communistic ideas. By 1883 he had founded three more societies, which went the way of their predecessors. Then, not wishing to complicate matters, he began to resurrect old societies instead of founding new ones. Mr. Longley owns forty acres of unimproved land not far from St. Louis, and he wants one hundred men to live on this land and enjoy the advantages of communism. Now and then he succeeds in getting two or three men, or a family, to try to improve the land; but up to the present they have remained so brief a time that little has been accomplished.

To get the more hopeful side of community life, we must now leave these three periods of experiments and turn to the group known as the religious societies. These societies must be counted both as the most successful and the longest lived. The six most important of this group have had an average length of life of 95 years. These are: the Perfectionists of Oneida, New York, who came together in 1848 and gave up communism to become a joint stock company thirty-three years later; the Separatists of Zoar, Ohio, who started in 1817 and became individualistic in 1898, eighty-one years later; the Amana Community of Iowa; the Harmony and the Ephrata societies of Pennsylvania; and the Shakers. The last four of these are in existence to-day. The Amana community is sixty-two years old, the Harmonists one hundred and two years old, the Shakers one hundred and eighteen years old, and the Ephrata society one hundred and seventy-three years old.

Although Ephrata is notable on account of its age, from the standpoint of communism little of interest has been connected with it since the death of its founder in 1786. Once it contained three hundred members, but now it has only seventeen.

The Shakers are perhaps the most widely known of all these communities because of their numerous branches. At present they have seventeen societies in nine different states (Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York,

Ohio, Kansas, Georgia and Florida), with a total membership of about one thousand. In 1878 there were twenty-four hundred Shakers, and at one time there were as many as five thousand. As celibacy is one of their religious principles they must rely upon the outside world for new members, and most of their permanent members have come to them after periods of great religious revival and are persons of serious religious convictions. The Shakers adopt many children, but the majority leave them before they are twenty years of age. The Shakers own much land—more land, they say, than is profitable for them to hold. In other ways they cannot be called rich. Much of their property has declined in value, and they have met with losses by fire. Their communism has been successful; but, as is the case with other religious societies, it has been secondary to their religious life.

One of the oldest and most prosperous of the religious communistic societies is the Harmony Society of Pennsylvania; but as its members, like the Shakers, are celibate, they do not serve as the best example of a religious community. This community is the one which sold its first site in Indiana in 1824 to Robert Owen for the establishment of New Harmony. At that time the Harmonists formed an industrious village of one thousand souls with profitable industries, including cotton, woolen, and silk mills, orchards and vineyards. Now the membership is reduced to five, most of their houses are let to outsiders and the greater part of the industries are carried on by outsiders. Although for many years the community has been characterized by a peaceful and uneventful life, it has passed through trials which would have ruined most societies. Doubtless, therefore, it was their religious life alone which kept them together. This society, like most of the others, began its life with pioneer work, and the first years were years of hard, unremunerative toil. During these years dissatisfaction was felt, and many withdrew with their property. Internal dissensions also injured their credit. But the first leader of the society, George Rapp, was a man of ability and one in whom the majority regarded with implicit confidence. Through his religious leadership largely the society persevered. The progress of the society

has been impeded also by its unfortunate choice of locations. It has moved twice, but without serious losses. In 1831 the leaders were deceived by the entrance of a false prophet into their fold. He won many followers and, when the inevitable break came between the new prophet and the old, the former withdrew with two hundred and fifty followers and a settlement of one hundred and five thousand dollars. This, of course, weakened the society, although their prosperous state is shown by the fact that they were able to pay the full amount in a single year.

Later on a more subtle enemy seized the society in the shape of a desire for speculation. Some of the younger members were not content with moderate prosperity, but wished to keep up with the race for wealth in the outside world. The discovery of oil on their land only increased this desire. Their speculations, however, were not successful. A business depression followed, which brought about the closing of some of the industries. Some of the members withdrew and litigation arose over their rights in the common property. Aside from actual losses, a poor system of bookkeeping complicated the affairs of the society and in 1892 it was in debt for over a million and a half dollars. A new manager, Mr. Duss, appointed in 1891, has shown great ability in putting the society upon a firm financial basis again. He has been greatly annoyed in recent years by repeated law suits from former members or their relatives, to obtain a share in the property; but thus far all suits have been decided in favor of the society. Most of the remaining Harmonists are now well along in years. In fact, the active communistic society has already passed away; interest now centres upon the final disposition of the property.

The best example of a communistic society now existing in the United States is that of the Amana Community in Iowa. This community contains seven small villages, with a population of nearly eighteen hundred; and these, unlike the Shaker villages, are united into a single communistic system. The history of the Amana community shows that it has experienced fewer hardships than many communities, but has not benefited by the exceptional managing ability that the Harmonists have

had. The Amana Community moved once, from western New York to Iowa, but the change was a gain rather than a loss because the market value of the land in New York was much greater than that in Iowa. The society now owns twenty-six thousand acres of land and, in addition to farming and gardening, it carries on several mills, including a calico print factory and two woolen mills. Work in the Amana factories is in pleasing contrast to work in ordinary factories. No children are employed, seats are provided for women, and the effort seems to be to make the work as pleasant as possible. Furthermore the same individuals do not work all the time at the same employment, but give their services where they are most needed. Women do not work in the mills on Monday, for that is washing day, and in harvest time they may be found in the fields. The community employs from one hundred and fifty to two hundred outsiders to help carry on the industries, and they admit that a hired laborer performs much more work than one of their number; but the members prefer the greater comfort to the increase in wealth.

The method of distributing the products at Amana is noteworthy, because this is one of the few communistic societies which recognize differences in needs among adult members. Families occupy separate houses and take their meals in common dining rooms accommodating from thirty-five to fifty persons. Food is carried, however, to those who are not able to come to the dining rooms. In addition to their food, individuals are given credit at the store in amounts varying from thirty-five to seventy-five dollars a year. It is recognized that persons following certain occupations, as, for instance, that of a physician, require more goods than ordinary day laborers. It may easily be imagined that a maximum difference of forty dollars a year will not produce glaring social inequalities. In fact, the purpose seems to be merely to give necessary efficiency to different occupations.

The wealth produced at Amana is probably not so great as would be produced with the same labor and capital under competition. Ordinarily the accounts show a small balance in favor of the society, but sometimes there is a deficit. Their

wealth has been derived largely from increased land values. In fact the property-holding in Amana is somewhat less per capita than the holding in the rest of the same county or in the state as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage is not esteemed so highly in the community as celibacy, yet marriage is commonly practised, and, as the members are of good German stock, babies have never figured as an annual deficit. It is thought advisable to place an age limit on marriage: men are forbidden to marry under twenty-four years of age and women under twenty. Upon marriage a couple lose caste in the church, but may regain it if they can prove that it has not interfered with their spiritual development.

As Amana is the most prosperous communistic society in the United States, and probably in the world, the conditions contributing to its success should be carefully noted. First, communism at Amana is not the chief object of the society, but is only one part of an all-important religious belief. Secondly, as belief in certain religious dogmas is a requisite for membership, Amana has escaped those unsuitable members who have proved such a burden to most communities. New recruits have come usually from Germany and have been made to serve a probationary term of two years. Furthermore, as marriage is permitted, the society has increased from within. Members have not been obliged, like the Shakers, to adopt children who have turned out to be poor material. Thirdly, the society has been composed of individuals of the same race, the same belief, and, for the most part, of the same social position. All have been immigrants in a strange land and have found it essential to keep together. German is the language ordinarily used in the community, although both German and English are taught in the schools. Fourthly, the membership is composed of a class of Germans who are accustomed to hard work and are satisfied with plain living.

Another religious society, similar to Amana in many ways, is that of the Separatists of Zoar, Ohio. This society is of interest because it voluntarily abandoned its communistic features

<sup>1</sup> See Bulletin of the Department of Labor, no. 35, p. 586.

in 1898 at the request of the younger members. Without attempting a description of the society itself, I wish to consider the causes of dissolution and also some of the results.

Zoar, like Amana, was founded by a German religious sect. Nearly all the members were German and they required a preliminary trial before admitting an applicant to membership. Marriage was permitted in the community. The society was much smaller than Amana, numbering two hundred and twenty-two at the time of dissolution. During the life of the founder, Joseph Bäumeler, the Zoarites amassed considerable property; but after his death in 1853, their industries were less productive and their property declined in value. In fact at the time of its dissolution, the society was running seriously behind. It was able, however, to distribute about \$1500 worth of property to each member, but in its most prosperous period it was said that the per capita wealth amounted to twice that sum.

Mr. Randall, one of the historians of the society,<sup>1</sup> visited Zoar just before its dissolution and gave an interesting account of the causes of dissatisfaction. The older members were happy and contented, finding their life free from care and from excessive work; but the younger members had lost the religious faith of their ancestors. They had seen something of the world and were restless. Their contact with the outside hands employed at Zoar, about fifty in number, is said to have been injurious to them. Members in one way and another began to earn money outside the community, and small individual possessions gave them the desire for more. With the taste for individual wealth grew criticism of the system of equal payment for unequal work. Some members thought they had the difficult tasks, and were dissatisfied because others got off with easy jobs. The baker thought there was no chance for a young man. He had worked for years and had nothing to show for it. The shoemaker thought it was not according to nature to work for others. Many admitted that communism was wasteful, especially as to food and fuel. Articles that came easily and plentifully were not sufficiently valued and there was no incentive to economy.

<sup>1</sup> E. O. Randall, *The Separatist Society of Zoar*.

After Zoar became individualistic, Mr. Randall paid it another visit and noted some significant changes. A long-distance telephone at the hotel first caught his eye; near by hung a penny-in-the-slot chewing-gum machine. Across the street an ice-cream parlor had been opened. Houses had been repaired, streets had been named and the village had taken on a more modern air. Even domestic life was becoming up-to-date, for the first divorce in the history of Zoar had been applied for. Competition had crept in in the shape of a rival shoemaker. Some admitted that they had to work harder; but the younger element at least were pleased with the new ways and enjoyed saying: "This is mine."

Another successful communistic society was that of the Perfectionists of Oneida, New York, founded in 1848 by J. H. Noyes. Although the society was founded primarily on a religious basis, Noyes was a student of communism and had definite theories concerning the essentials for success in communistic life. Oneida had three characteristics which distinguished it from other communistic societies. First, the society was not agricultural but was predominantly industrial. Noyes believed that agriculture was not a good means of obtaining wealth, and that members of communistic societies were not always fitted for agricultural pursuits and might be better employed in a diversity of industries. The great weakness of the early societies he attributed to large property in land. Secondly, the system of complex marriage was instituted, by which the family was coextensive with the community. Along with this went Noyes's idea of stirpiculture, or scientific propagation. The religious basis for this community of the family need not be discussed here, though it should be noted that the Perfectionists maintained that all the important characteristics of the family were preserved, namely, permanence of the union and responsibility in the protection of women and in the maintenance and education of children.<sup>1</sup> From the standpoint of communism alone, it should be noted that this system fulfils a need which has been held by many to be essential to

<sup>1</sup> See J. H. Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, p. 639.

the success of communistic life. It is said that the family forms a centre of selfish individualism, which is inconsistent with communism and will eventually disrupt a community. This centre is destroyed alike by a system of celibacy and by a system of community of wives. The Shakers and Harmonists chose the former, the Perfectionists the latter. The religious belief decided which form should be adopted. In the one case the society must rely upon adoption for future members, while in the other case the society may be self-perpetuating and, to that extent, may have the better chance for survival. Thirdly, Noyes instituted the system of mutual criticism in which a man offered himself freely for criticism to all persons who wished to give it.<sup>1</sup> When a man is frankly told his faults by persons with whom he daily associates, the force of public opinion is used in all its strength to adapt a man to his environment. In a new environment like that of a communistic society, those characteristics which are particularly inconsistent with communism would be subject to strong criticism, and hence be eliminated. Under wise leadership the system of mutual criticism might be a very valuable aid in adapting persons to a new social life.

The characteristics of the Oneida Community were evidently such as required a wise leader who held the complete confidence of the members. Noyes was such a leader. During the thirty-three years of its existence the society enjoyed exceptional harmony and prosperity. The immediate cause of the withdrawal of Noyes from the society and of its reorganization into a joint stock company was the opposition aroused by the Presbyterian clergymen of New York against their social practices. Other forces were at work, however, to weaken the society. Noyes's influence over the younger members was not so strong as it had been over the older members in the beginning, and the religious life of the community was weaker. Furthermore, it may be seen that, although the social practices were such as might be maintained without disruption of the society

<sup>1</sup> The Shakers also have a system of Confession to Elders, and the Amana Communists an annual *Untersuchung*, but neither of these customs is so effective as the Oneida "criticism."



among a select membership thoroughly imbued with the religious principles of the sect and ready to follow the directions of the leader, they could not be carried out with a different membership less easily controlled by the leader. Had the Perfectionists not reorganized when they did, it is probable that they might be classed now with those religious societies which have broken up at the death of the leader.

One independent society, Icaria, ought to be mentioned because of its long existence of forty-seven years and its peculiar history. Before the dissolution of the last branch in 1895, Icaria was cited as an example of a successful society not on a religious basis and not celibate. The history of Icaria has been one of heroic struggle, of intermittent prosperity, and of bitter strife. Among the many misfortunes of the Icarians it may be mentioned, first, that they were deceived at the start with regard to the character of the location in Texas, and in moving from there to their next home in Nauvoo, Illinois, they suffered great hardships and loss of members. In Illinois division occurred over the question of method of government. Finally, in 1856, Cabet, the leader of the whole movement, was expelled and with one hundred and eighty followers withdrew to St. Louis. A week later Cabet died, but one hundred and fifty of his followers held together and in 1858 founded the Cheltenham community near St. Louis. This community six years later split up over the same questions that caused its separation from the parent society.

The majority left in the Illinois home were so weakened by the division that in 1860 they were obliged to give up the property to pay their debts, and they removed to southwestern Iowa, where some of the members had previously been sent to acquire rights to government lands. Here began a life of great toil and privation for the means to keep them alive and to meet their indebtedness. Within ten years party spirit again became manifest, and disagreements arose between the older and younger members over the general policy to be pursued. This ended in a division of the property and the formation of two separate societies. Later, an offshoot from the younger party formed the Cloverdale community in California. Finally

these three branches simply faded away through lack of energy caused by frequent divisions and withdrawal of members. This, in brief, is the experience of a society which has been looked upon as an example of rational democratic communism. The society would doubtless have disbanded long before had it not been for the fact that they were religiously devoted to their principles and were a foreign band in a strange land.

From this glimpse into the history of a few representative colonies, we may pass to a general summary of the movement as a whole. The length of life of the great majority of societies has been very short. There are sixty-two societies whose ages may be obtained with approximate accuracy. Of these nineteen lived less than one year, although nine others whose date of closing is not known may with safety be added to this number. Ten lived from one to two years; ten, from two to three years; five lived four years; one, five years; three, six years; and one, eight years; eight, from ten to twenty-five years; and five, over thirty years. The more recent societies have endured somewhat longer than the earlier non-religious societies, as they have doubtless been organized with greater care. Societies of the Owenite period lived on the average one year and five months; those of the Fourierist period, two years and seven months; those of the modern period which have disbanded averaged four years; the independent societies lasted seven years, the high average being due entirely to the Icarian societies, and the disbanded religious societies had averaged twenty-four years each.

Ever since the time of Aristotle wise men have pointed out the inherent difficulties of communism, but for the most part the difficulties they have dwelt upon have not been the conspicuous causes of failure. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the system has been applied to small societies and has not involved a whole state.

John Stuart Mill gives the three following objections to communism. First, each person would be occupied in evading his share of the work. Second, there would be no prudential restraint upon the population. Third, there would be difficulty in fairly apportioning labor among the members.

As to the first, evasion of work has certainly been a source of trouble, but apparently has not been a necessary result of the communistic system. Ten or twelve societies at least have been seriously troubled with idlers joining the colony and contributing more advice than labor. In fact, shiftless persons seem to be attracted to communistic societies in the hope of living on others; but such persons are products of the outside world. The communistic system as illustrated by the older societies tends to make the members take life easily, but experience does not show that it causes them to evade their share of the work. In fact, the Shakers say that the shiftless persons who join them for the winter only catch the spirit of the place and perform the work assigned them without shirking. The testimony of Nordhoff was that there were no idlers among communists; but it must be remembered that Nordhoff wrote for the most part of religious societies, which are the most successful of all. Apparent exceptions are to be found, however, as in the case of the Coöperative Brotherhood at Burley, where a man after paying his membership fee is entitled to a home and employment. Feeling that his position is secured and that he is the equal of every one else, he may disregard authority and may not always work to the best advantage.

As to the second objection, so far as I know, no society has been troubled with the great bugbear of over-population. Some have been handicapped in their pioneer stages by having families with large numbers of children join them. But none have thought of attributing their troubles to an excessive birthrate.

The third difficulty—that of apportioning the labor fairly among members—is a very practical one and has figured as a cause for dissatisfaction. The form it has taken, however, has not been a struggle for easy places, but discontent over the remuneration, whether equal or unequal, of different classes of labor. In this form it is closely connected with the first objection cited. In both the Yellow Springs Community and the Wisconsin Phalanx, it is mentioned as a cause of dissension, but was not of sufficient importance to be classed as a cause of

failure. At Zoar, one of the numerous complaints was equal remuneration for unequal work. Other colonies also have been troubled to a greater or less extent over the question of method of remuneration. The reason it has not been of greater importance is probably because each individual who joins a community is convinced at the start that the method of distribution employed in that community is the ideally just one. In most colonies also members are permitted as much as possible to follow their own inclinations in the matter of employment. If dissatisfaction arises, the employment may be varied. On the whole, members have shown themselves willing to perform the work that was evidently necessary to be done.

Of the communities which have dissolved we have records of about fifty-four sufficiently detailed to show the causes of dissolution. It will be noticed that some of the failures given have nothing to do with the application of communistic principles, but may be traced wholly to the difficulties of establishing a home in an unsuitable place or by persons unaccustomed to pioneer work. In most cases the causes of failure were complicated, and it is often difficult to distinguish the primary cause from the secondary. Sometimes the causes were insignificant, almost accidental, showing that the society was never upon a firm foundation. For example, poor location caused three failures; sickness caused one directly and was a contributory cause in two more cases; lack of funds caused eleven failures directly and was the indirect cause in at least six other instances; absolute dishonesty was mentioned in only one case, although bad management was a secondary cause in a number of cases; legal difficulties troubled three societies. Among the important causes we find that four religious societies dissolved because of the death of their leaders. This is one of the greatest dangers threatening religious societies, for when the leader is also the prophet, his personality is often the real bond of union. In two cases comparatively successful societies have definitely decided in favor of individualism.

By far the most important cause of failure is lack of harmony among members. From one cause or another divisions arise. At least one-half of the fifty-four societies under consideration

met their fate in this way, and it is probable that more would have been included if they had not met an early death in some other way. "General depravity" one writer calls it; "lack of superior beings" is the complaint of another.

The underlying cause of dissension as illustrated by recent experiments is the rigid character of the communistic organization. There is a lack of individual freedom and individual responsibility. All are bound together for a common purpose and are equally responsible, and in such a case it is much easier to blame others than oneself. Furthermore, the opinion of the majority, or of the governing body, whatever it may be, must prevail even in details. If one holds different opinions from the majority he is not at liberty to carry them out in his own case but must do as others do. This compulsion is a continued source of friction and is one cause of the fierce contest for places of authority. The reorganization of the Washington societies was intended to obviate this difficulty. In this particular the superiority of religious societies is manifest, for their religious doctrines require the subordination of the individual to the community.

The dangers inherent in the rigid form of organization are increased, however, by the queer mixture of people attracted to community life. Very eccentric individuals drift into colony life, and they are likely to migrate from colony to colony, thus increasing their relative influence. It is a wonder that they get along as well as they do. An over-supply of such persons brought suffering to a recent society in Georgia—the Christian Commonwealth. The founders had such a thorough belief in the power of brotherhood to transform character that they put down every restriction to entrance into the society and opened their hearts and doors to all who wanted to be loved. They really intended to invite all who had large enough hearts to love. Response to their call brought a curious lot, who were willing to be loved but not willing to be useful. The society was not rich enough to support parasites; but on the eve of its consequent dissolution, through the editor of its paper, it stoutly maintained that it loved the new-comers still, because they needed it so much.

Vegetarians have made trouble in some societies, for they required a separate table and cast reflections on their brethren who ate meat. Dress-reform, with an apparent desire to look hideous, has been the hobby of some. Advocates of reform in the marriage relation have produced discord in many communities.

Even without the complication of cranks, however, dissension in communistic societies seems always to be threatening. The extreme intimacy of relation, resulting from the mode of life, tends to produce discord. Intimacy of life in a modern apartment seems to be as much as human nature can sustain; yet this is absolute privacy compared to the life in the unitary building of a communistic society.

Aristotle foresaw this difficulty of communistic life and gave the warning in his *Politics*:<sup>1</sup>

As a general rule it is no easy matter for people to live together and enjoy any worldly goods in common, more especially such things as land and landed produce. This is evident from the case of people who travel together and keep a common purse. They almost invariably come to quarrels and collisions arising from common and unimportant causes. So, too, we are most likely to come into collision with those servants with whom we have most to do as they wait upon us in the affairs of every-day life.

The experience of communistic societies proves that if the intimate relationships are to be kept up, there must be some powerful force to keep the people together. Thus far only a religious tie has proved sufficient. *Icaria* is the only non-religious society which continued its existence for a long time, and that was divided through strife into five parts. Simple devotion to communism itself has never proved a sufficiently strong bond, for people advocate communism on the ground that it is superior to the present social conditions, and if they find it inferior their bond of union breaks and dissolution follows. It is conceivable that some other force than a religious one might hold a community together, and it is possible that a community of "superior beings" would need no extra bond. The Brook-

<sup>1</sup> Bk. ii, ch. v (Welldon's trans., p. 48).

Farmers were harmonious, only they were not farmers. The point is that "superior beings" can get along under the present system. Those who fail under the present system are also unable to form a better.

Yet, after all, community life possesses a strong attraction for many. They enjoy the calm life, the absence from care and worry. This peacefulness of life is conducive to longevity, as has been noted by many writers. And the social equality gives an agreeable sensation. The older inhabitants of Zoar showed great regret at giving up the communistic life. Persons who have been members even of unsuccessful societies look back upon the experience as the happiest time of their lives. On the other hand, the life which one person finds peaceful another finds slow; what one finds free from care another finds unprogressive.

It is a noteworthy fact that the régime of communism, as well as the absolutism of the Russian bureaucracy, tends to the growth of anarchism. After the Owenite failures a strong reaction set in against communistic principles. Fifteen years after the dissolution of New Harmony, when McDonald, the historian of early communism, visited the place, he was cautioned not to speak of socialism, as the subject was unpopular. The reaction led to the two experiments of Joseph Warren—Utopia and Modern Times—based on the theory of individual sovereignty. In the midst of the socialistic propaganda in Washington, the Mutual Home Association, an anarchistic colony, sprang up. And later both Burley and Equality reorganized on a much freer individualistic basis. At Ruskin anarchistic sentiments became manifest early in the history of the society, and they were the chief cause of the dismemberment of the association. Free love doctrines which, one can hardly fail to note, accompany communism so persistently, indicate also one phase of the anarchistic reaction applied to the family relation.

The discontented who believe that the present organization of society is so hopeless as not to admit of reform are of three classes. Some, finding one extreme of social reorganization unsatisfactory, react in favor of the other extreme. Others will never admit defeat, but ally themselves with one attempt

after another as often as the opportunity presents itself. The third class retires from the battlefield more gracefully, retaining their former convictions but admitting that the time is not ripe.

The question of the productiveness of communistic societies has been answered differently by writers of different periods. Nordhoff, writing in 1874, studied a period of great communistic prosperity and he believed that the wealth of the communists per capita was greater than the wealth of the outside world. The prosperity of that period was due largely to exceptional leaders among the older societies. After the death of these men their prosperity declined. As has been already noted, Amana has a smaller proportionate wealth per capita than the rest of Iowa. And it is doubtful whether communistic societies produce more wealth than is produced with the same labor and capital in the outside world. It is possible, however, that communists more than make up the difference in the ease and comfort of life.

It is difficult to make a fair comparison between communists and persons in the outside world. Nordhoff compared communists with the farmer and artisan classes, but members of the old societies should not be compared with farmers and artisans of the present time, for that would be going on the supposition that classes in the outside world had remained stationary. We should compare the inhabitants, say of Amana, with a similar company of laborers, or better of German immigrants, who also began their life here in the forties. If one could follow the history of such a company, he would probably find that some of the families had by this time gained considerable wealth, and their children would have the advantages of a college education. Only the least successful families would remain in the position in which they started in 1844. On the other hand, it is true that some of the families under stress of competition may have degenerated even to pauperism, but it is not true that extreme poverty has been common with the German immigrants of the forties; and those who have degenerated in the mean time do not come anywhere near offsetting those who have noticeably improved their condition. The



communistic life has served to keep the members of the community near to a mean, but the level of this mean is certainly much below that of a similar company of persons beginning life in this country at the same time.

Communistic societies have often made a mistake in attempting to hold large tracts of land and make agriculture their chief industry; but this is a necessary part of their theory that communistic colonies should be as nearly self-supporting as possible. Communists think they are placed at great disadvantage in having to buy goods produced under capitalistic methods. Some attribute their slow accumulation of wealth to this fact. In general it may be said that communists greatly overestimate the socialistic idea of the exploitation of labor by capitalists. The coöperators at Burley thought that the burden of supporting the old and the disabled would not be noticeable when they were sure of the whole produce of their labor.

In abolishing industrial competition communism doubtless loses a social competition which is a stimulus to progress. While communistic societies often start out with the most advanced methods, the members soon become too well satisfied with their attainments. Successful societies withdraw somewhat from the world and lose the stimulus of the world's progress.

Apparent exceptions to this statement are of two kinds. First, communistic societies are able to use labor-saving devices in kitchen or laundry work, for example, where they could not be used in small families. This certainly tends to economy of labor. This progressiveness, however, is due to the fact that they cater to large numbers instead of to small. Nordhoff complains that some of the communes do not use labor-saving devices so much as they might. Secondly, in a number of cases communes have taken the lead in introducing advanced methods. An advanced system of education was introduced into New Harmony. The first electric telephone to be used in the state of Iowa is said to have been used at Icaria. Both the Shakers and the Perfectionists acquired a reputation for their inventive genius. It is quite possible that inventions might be stimulated as much under a communistic as under an

individualistic system; but many of the advanced methods used in communistic societies, such as the educational system of New Harmony, may be traced to exceptional individuals who join the societies. Such signs of progressiveness are more evident in the early than in the later years of communes. Notwithstanding these exceptions, the abatement of individual competition in communistic societies has in the long run removed a stimulus to progress, as is well illustrated by the history of Zoar.

Another important consideration is the effect of communism on the mental life and upon the desire for higher social attainments. The evidence on this point may seem somewhat conflicting, but on the whole it shows that communists are likely to be satisfied with the acquisition of necessities and with sensuous enjoyment. Members of the Skaneateles Community and of the North American Phalanx became satisfied with moderate material achievements. At Bethel and Aurora, and in most of the German religious societies, intellectual and artistic achievements and even the higher forms of pleasure were not valued. Much depends, however, on the character of the people who make up the communities. The Perfectionists made much of their intellectual life, and the Brook Farmers certainly left nothing to be desired in this respect. Many of the members of recent colonies, such as the Christian Commonwealth and the Coöperative Brotherhood are above the average in intellectual attainment, and the social and educational life of these societies is of considerable importance. But here again we must be careful to distinguish between the character of the men who join the colony and the effect of communistic life on the character of the members. Present-day socialists are men with ideas. They read and think, even though it may be in a narrow range of subjects. The real point to consider is whether, after the satisfaction of the material wants, the desire for æsthetic and intellectual pursuits is as likely to develop under communism as under competition. The weight of evidence seems to be against this. The rivalry of competitive life causes progress in intellectual lines apart from the simple desire for intellectual activity. In the compet-

itive world progress along intellectual lines is usually accompanied with greater efficiency and hence by advance in economic position. But in a communistic society no amount of intellectual attainment will give a man a greater income than his fellow members. In this sense, then, intellectual progress is separated from material progress. Intellectual pursuits might still be carried on for their own sake; but, if no special distinction were given to the more intellectual members, progress would be slow. The truth is, we do not usually become proficient in intellectual lines because we enjoy them; but we begin to enjoy them after we have obtained some proficiency. Much of our intellectual progress is due in the beginning to some other motive than pure love for the work, and these other motives are largely eliminated in communistic life. Desire for distinction and for social position are perfectly normal motives for activity, if they can be turned into the proper channels. In communistic societies these desires are too often limited to obtaining positions of authority on the board of government. In communism, therefore, where the principle of equality reigns, it may be said that the desire for distinction is generally weakened; but, in so far as it exists, it does not serve to develop the individual, but tends to cause struggle, often leading to strife among individuals for positions. On the whole, it is true that intellect in communistic colonies is not highly valued, although exception may be made of religious societies where the members reverence their spiritual leaders.

Another important point, seldom considered by writers on communism, is the possibility of the communistic organization passing safely from generation to generation. It has been assumed that if a communistic society existed for twenty or thirty years the success of the system was demonstrated; but no system has proved its suitability to the needs of society until it has shown that it is sufficiently elastic to adapt itself to the more liberal and diverse views of the on-coming generation. This period, which marks the greatest progress in social institutions, is the final critical point with communistic colonies. A communistic society, especially one founded on a religious basis, may select members who are sufficiently harmonious to

live together all their lives; but their children will not be selected in the same way. They are members from force of circumstances, not from conscious choice. They will tend to represent again the normal amount of variation. They are not united because of similar beliefs, and it is highly improbable that a group of children, when they come to maturity, will show the same desires and beliefs as their parents, even though they have been brought up in the same general environment. If a social system has to choose its members continually and cannot adapt itself to the normal amount of variation in individuals, it is not fitted to become general. Thus far no communistic society with the possible exception of Amana, has demonstrated that it can do this. On the other hand, several have fallen before the broader aspirations of the rising generation. Zoar succumbed to the demands of the younger members after eighty-one years of existence. The rising generation at Oneida did not have the same respect for the perfectionist principles as the previous generation. The later quarrels of the Icarians were between the young progressive members and the old conservative members. The Shakers and Harmonists being celibates have continued to select their members, their numerical success depending upon the number of suitable persons who are willing to join them. The experience of Ephrata might not seem to bear out this principle, as celibacy has not always been a settled policy with them; but the principle of selection has surely been operative in the reduction of membership from three hundred to seventeen. If there is a free withdrawal of members not suited to the communistic life, the society may persist, although the total membership is likely to diminish rapidly.

From the experiences of communistic societies in the United States, we may conclude that such societies are likely to come to an untimely end from some minor preventable cause, such as sickness, lack of funds, or legal difficulties. Or, if societies are carefully enough planned to avoid these mishaps, they must face the more serious task of preserving harmony among the members. To do this some bond of union other than the mere resolve to coöperate seems essential. Up to the present a

peculiar religious creed has been the most powerful force in accomplishing this end, though it cannot be said that no other will avail. A colony which has overcome dissension and become fairly prosperous will then have to face the fundamental question of its suitability for a progressive state and of its power to adapt itself to successive generations.

More than one society has decided that communism, or at least extensive coöperation, was desirable during the early pioneer life when the members were providing themselves with necessities; but that it was not the most desirable state for a progressive life after some wealth had been acquired. This is the message of Zoar and of the Wisconsin Phalanx, and it is the experience of some of the communistic societies of the Middle Ages, which could not continue communism after acquiring wealth. A band of people united for the attainment of a particular end will fall apart when that end is attained or is no longer sought. This fact seems to show that, while communism is advantageous for a certain stage in progress or for a certain purpose, it is not sufficiently elastic to give free play to individual desires, and in a more advanced social condition the ambitious members are hindered more than the others are helped.

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## COMMUNISTIC COLONIES IN THE UNITED STATES

FOUNDED	CLASS <sup>1</sup>	NAME OF COLONY	LOCATION	MEMBERS <sup>2</sup>	CLOSED	CAUSES OF CLOSING
1732	R	Ephrata .....	Penn.	17	.....	
1786	R	Jerusalem .....	N. Y.	.....	1820	Death of leader.
1787	R	Shakers .....	9 states <sup>3</sup>	1000	.....	
1803	R	Harmonists .....	Penn.	5	.....	
1817	R	Separatists .....	Ohio	222	1898	Individualism.
1820	R	Snowhill .....	Penn.	30	?	?
1825	O	Yellow Springs Community .....	Ohio	500	1825	Lack of harmony.
1825	O	New Harmony .....	Ind.	1000	1827	Discordant membership.
1825	O	Nashoba Community .....	Tenn.	15	1828	Lack of superior beings.
1825	O	Coöperative Society .....	Penn.	?	?	?
1825	O	Forrestville Community .....	Ind.	60	1826	?
1825	O	Franklin Community .....	N. Y.	?	?	?
1826	O	Haverstraw Community .....	N. Y.	80	1826	Dishonesty, selfishness.
1826	O	Coxsackie Community .....	N. Y.	?	1827	Lack of funds, selfishness.
1826	O	Kendal Community .....	Ohio	200	1828	Sickness, debt.
1826	O	Blue Springs Community .....	Ind.	?	1827	?
1826	O	Maluria <sup>4</sup> .....	Ind.	120	1828	Religious controversy.
1826	O	Feiba Pevell <sup>4</sup> .....	Ind.	70	1827	Individualism.
1830	Ind	Equity .....	Ohio	?	1832	Unhealthy location.
1841	F	Brook Farm .....	Mass.	115	1847	Fire, lack of funds.
1841	R	Hopedale Community .....	Mass.	175	1858	Bad management, poor membership.
1841	Ind	Marlboro Association .....	Ohio	24	1845	Debt, business complications.
1842	Ind	Northampton Association .....	Mass.	130	1846	Debt, lack of harmony.
1843	R	Amana Community .....	N. Y., Ia.	1800	.....	
1843	F	Sylvania .....	Penn.	145	1844	Poor location.
1843	O	One-Mentian Community .....	Penn.	40	1844	Poor location.
1843	R	McKean Co. Association .....	Penn.	large	?	?

<sup>1</sup> R = Religious; O = Owenite; F = Fourierist; Ind = Independent; M = Modern socialistic or coöperative. <sup>2</sup> At date of closing, or at present time. <sup>3</sup> See above, p. 640. <sup>4</sup> Offshoots of New Harmony. Ten communities in all are said to have existed on the New Harmony estate, but details concerning the others are not known.

## COMMUNISTIC COLONIES IN THE UNITED STATES—Continued

FOUNDED	CLASS	NAME OF COLONY	LOCATION	MEMBERS	CLOSED	CAUSES OF CLOSING
1843	R	Peace Union Settlement .....	Penn.	?	1844	?
1843	F	Social Reform Unity .....	Penn.	20	1844	Lack of preparation and of capital.
1843	Ind	Fruitlands .....	Mass.	?	1843	Financial failure.
1843	F	Moorhouse Union .....	N. Y.	?	1844	Poor and discordant membership.
1843	F	Jefferson Co. Industrial Assoc'n.	N. Y.	400	1844	Disagreements, lack of capital.
1843	F	Bureau Co. Phalanx .....	Ill.	?	?	?
1843	F	La Grange Phalanx .....	Ind.	150	1846	Disagreements.
1843	F	North American Phalanx .....	N. J.	112	1856	Disagreements, fire, lack of interest.
1843	F	Washtenaw Phalanx .....	Mich.	?	?	?
1843	Ind	Skaneateles Community .....	N. Y.	150	1846	Lack of harmony.
1843	Ind	Prairie Home Community .....	Ohio	130	1844	Debt, poor organization.
1844	F	Leraysville Phalanx .....	Penn.	40	1844	Poor accommodations, discontent with management.
1844	O	Goose Pond Community .....	Penn.	60	1844	?
1844	F	Clarkson Phalanx .....	N. Y.	420	1844	Legal difficulties, lack of accommodations.
1844	F	Sodus Bay Phalanx .....	N. Y.	300	1846	Religious differences, sickness.
1844	F	Bloomfield Association .....	N. Y.	148	1858	Legal difficulties.
1844	F	Mixville Association .....	N. Y.	?	?	?
1844	F	Ontario Union .....	N. Y.	150	1845	?
1844	F	Ohio Phalanx .....	Ohio	120	1845	Disagreements, lack of funds.
1844	F	Trumbull Phalanx .....	Ohio	250	1848	Admission of unsuitable members, sickness.
1844	F	Clermont Phalanx .....	Ohio	120	1846	Lack of funds, jealousies.
1844	F	Alphadelphia Phalanx .....	Mich.	200	1846	Disagreements, bad management.
1844	F	Wisconsin Phalanx .....	Wis.	180	1850	Individualism.
1844	F	Iowa Pioneer Phalanx .....	N. Y., Ia.	?	?	?
1844	F	Garden Grove Community .....	Ia.	?	?	?
1844	R	Bethel .....	Mo.	1000	1880	Death of leader.
1845	F	Columbian Phalanx .....	Ohio	150	1846	?
1845	F	Integral Phalanx .....	Ohio, Ill.	120	1846	Discordant membership.

<sup>1</sup> Seceded from the One-Mention Community.

## COMMUNISTIC COLONIES IN THE UNITED STATES—Continued

FOUNDED	CLASS	NAME OF COLONY	LOCATION	MEMBERS	CLOSED	CAUSES OF CLOSING
1845	F	Saugamon Phalanx.....	Ill.	?	1845	Merged with "Integral."
1846	F	Spring Farm Association.....	Wis.	30	1849	Lack of unity, failure of crops.
1846	R	Bishop Hill Community.....	Ill.	1000	1862	Death of leader, bad management, religious dissensions.
1847	Ind <sup>1</sup>	Utopia.....	Ohio	?	1851	Undesirable location.
1848	R	Oneida Community.....	N. Y.	268	1881	Outside opposition.
1848	Ind	Icaria.....	Tex., Ill., Ia.	1500	1887 <sup>2</sup>	Disagreements.
1851	Ind <sup>1</sup>	Modern Times.....	N. Y.	100	?	Financial depression.
1851	R	Mountain Cove Community....	Va.	?	1853	Quarrels about property.
1851	R	Wallingford Community <sup>3</sup> .....	Conn.	38	1881	(See Oneida.)
1853	F	Raritan Bay Union <sup>4</sup> .....	N. J.	30	?	?
1856	R	Aurora.....	Ore.	350	1881	Death of leader.
1858	Ind	Cheltenham.....	Mo.	150	1864	Disagreements.
1861	R	Celesta.....	Penn.	20	1864	Poor location, bad leadership, disagreements.
1861	R	Adonai Shomo.....	Mass.	30	1896	Loss of members, poor leadership.
1867	R	Brockton Community.....	N. Y.	70	1880	Strife of leaders.
1869	Ind	Reunion Community.....	Mo.	27	1870	Disagreements.
1871	Ind	Progressive Community.....	Kan.	10	?	?
1872	Ind	Friendship Community.....	Mo.	?	1877	Outside opposition.
1874	Ind	Social Freedom Community....	Va.	15	?	?
1874	Ind	The Woman's Commonwealth..	Tex., D. C.	24	1900	Outside opposition.
1875	R	Fountain Grove Community ..	Cal.	20	?	?
1877	Ind	Esperanza.....	Kan.	?	?	?
1877	Ind	The Home.....	Mich.	12	?	?
1879	Ind	New Icarian Community.....	Ia.	34	1895	Lack of members.
1881	Ind	Principia.....	Mo.	?	?	?
1881	Ind	Cloverdale Community.....	Cal.	25	1884	United with Icaria.
1882	Ind	New Odessa Community.....	Ore.	30	?	?

<sup>1</sup> Anarchistic.<sup>2</sup> The younger party who retained the original name dissolved in 1887, the new Icarians continued community life until 1895.<sup>3</sup> Succeeded from North American Phalanx.<sup>4</sup> Branch of Oneida.



COMMUNISTIC COLONIES IN THE UNITED STATES—*Concluded*

FOUNDED	CLASS	NAME OF COLONY	LOCATION	MEMBERS	CLOSED	CAUSES OF CLOSING
1883	Ind	Mutual Aid Community.....	Mo.	25	?	?
1884	R	Shalam .....	N. Mex.	?	1901	Bad location, poor membership.
1884	Ind	Icaria-Speranza.....	Cal.	52	1887	Disagreements.
1886	M	Columbia Coöperative Colony..	Ore.	50	?	Opposition, lack of funds.
1889	R	The Lord's Farm .....	N. J.	16		
1892	M	Union Mills Company.....	Ore.	?	?	Financial difficulties.
1894	R	Koreshans .....	Fla.	60		
1894		Fairhope Ind. Association <sup>1</sup> ....	Ala.	74		
1894	M	Colorado Coöperation Company.	Col.	400		
1894	M	Home Employment Company..	Mo.	21		
1894	M	Ruskin Commonwealth.....	Tenn., Ga.	300	1902	Disagreements.
1895	M	Willard Coöperation Company.	Tenn.	50	1897	Financial difficulties.
1896	M	Christian Commonwealth.....	Ga.	105	1900	Financial difficulties, poor membership.
1897	M	Freedom Colony .....	Kan.	13	1905	Lack of capital, poor membership.
1897	M	Freeland (Equality).....	Wash.	41		
1897	M	Niksur Coöperation Association.	Minn.	50	1900	Not class-conscious.
1898		Mutual Home Association <sup>2</sup> ....	Wash.	91		
1898	M	Coöperative Brotherhood .....	Wash.	40		
1898	M	American Settlers' Association.	Ga.	46	1899	Merged with Ruskin.
1899	M	Coöperative Industrial College.	Ga.	24		
1899	R	Lystra .....	Va.	25		
1899 :	R	Friedheim .....	Va.	52	1900	Human weakness, lack of intelligence.
1899 :	M	Christian Social Association ..	Wis.	48	1904	Withdrawal of members.
1899	R	Commonwealth of Israel .....	Texas	42		
1900	M	Freeland Association.....	Wash.	40		

<sup>1</sup> Single tax.<sup>2</sup> Anarchistic.